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influence is observable, while on the east the Plains pattern of rank according to prowess in war has made a distinct impression.

Quite typical coastal class distinctions are present among the Lower Chinook at the mouth of the Columbia River. The Wishram of the Dalles serve as intermediaries between the Lower Chinook and the Plateau in trading activities. It is not surprising, therefore, that they recognize certain vague social distinctions.

> Three classes were recognized in addition to slaves, who stood outside the social structure. While these represented gradations of wealth, they were not primarily such since chiefs were not always among the wealthiest persons, and they in turn were not always chiefs. . . . A lowest class individual was specified as poor, owning no slaves and little of anything else.[38]

To the south, among the Klamath, social stratification is but weakly developed. In contrast to the Wishram, however, chiefs are invariably wealthy. Beyond these there is little difference in wealth from richest to poorest, a condition quite characteristic of the Plateau. Social position is not a matter of heredity.[39]

On the western edge of the Canadian Plateau, there is a certain awareness of class distinctions based upon descent. Among the Lillooet the descendents of chiefs "formed an aristocracy but had no privileges of any kind." But further there exists "a nobility of merit" in which membership is acquired through wealth, wisdom, oratory, and liberality. Men constituting this group are called "chiefs" as well as those belonging to the "nobility of rank." "The hereditary chiefs were looked upon as the real chiefs of communities, even although other men called chiefs might have greater influence and power."[40] This recognition of a loose hereditary nobility is found among the western Lillooet only; it has never reached the easternmost villages, or at least it is denied today. Furthermore, the "chiefs" of this aristocracy are sept chiefs, not political chiefs as such. Teit assumes that the first Lillooet septs were simple village groups. There is reason to believe that the political chiefs of these groups were quite strictly hereditary, as they are among the eastern Lillooet today. This would have provided a fertile base for the growth of sept distinctions under coastal influence. Thus the radical difference between western Lillooet organization and typical Plateau structure appears to be the result of very recent and rather

[38] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 211. [39] Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, p. 307.
[40] Teit, *Lillooet Indians*, pp. 254 f.

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simple reinterpretations. The recency is attested not only by the limited distribution but also by the existence of the "nobility of merit," an anomaly in a class society. This is obviously a concession to persisting Plateau social standards. Teit observes that

> it is quite evident that this clan organization must have a common origin with that of the Coast Salish. . . . We may safely conclude that the clan system was introduced through intercourse with the coast tribes, who, in their turn, seem to have adopted it from their northern neighbors.[a]

This would also be true, by implication, of class distinctions.

Similar conditions exist among the Shuswap. The western groups have recently adopted sept and class organization, while the eastern bulk of the tribe has retained typical Plateau social culture. In this case the period of adoption is very recent and quite definite.

> The organization of the [Fraser] Canyon division, and all of the bands of the Fraser River division north of Dog Creek, was based upon the system obtaining among the Carrier and Chilcotin. By 1850 the Lake division had also adopted this system in nearly all its details, and the Dog Creek band was very much influenced by it. At the same date the Pavilion band had adopted several features of a similar system prevailing among the Lillooet, and the High Bar band was beginning to be influenced by it also. The Indians state explicitly that these customs were introduced through the Canyon division, who had obtained them from the Chilcotin, and through the Soda Creek band, who had adopted them from the Carrier; and in these bands the system had its firmest hold.
>
> The people of these bands were divided into three classes—noblemen, common people, and slaves. The first class were called "chiefs," "chiefs' offspring," or "chiefs' descendents," and constituted in various bands from nearly one-half to over two-thirds of the whole population. In most bands there were few slaves; some of them the property of the nobility, and some that of the common people. The nobles had special privileges, and generally married within their class. Nobility was hereditary, and seems to have descended in both the male and the female line. Women of this class appear to have been on an equality with men, and had in all respects the same rights and privileges. Hereditary chiefs of the bands always belonged to the nobility, but it seems that they tended to become rather chiefs of clans than of bands.[a]

This reconstruction exemplifies well the history and conditions of adoption of coastal class and sept concepts, not only by the Shuswap,

[a] *Idem*, p. 254.
[a] Teit, *Shuswap*, pp. 575 f.

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but by the Chilcotin and Carrier as well. The borrowing is in all cases very recent, but somewhat earlier among the Athabascans than the Shuswap. It was in all cases superficial. Deep-seated Plateau standards have been maintained in one way or another. The "nobility" may include two-thirds of the population; a parallel "aristocracy of merit" may permit all men to be in effect upperclassmen; all may hold slaves; slaves are few; women maintain their equality; "special privileges" are said to exist but are hard to find.

It appears unnecessary to go over this same ground for the Chilcotin and Carrier. At least some of the latter never adopted sept organization. But all appear to entertain notions of class, somewhat more fundamental than among the Salish. Morice has indicated the recency of these concepts among the Carrier, while Goldman has ascertained that comparable organization among the Chilcotin is of quite recent adoption.[43] For the Sekani, Jenness provides specific dates:

> When the Sekani were confined to the western side of the Rockies through the hostility of the Beaver and the Cree they impinged continuously against the Gitksan and Carrier Indians, who were organized in the complex manner so characteristic of the Pacific coast. The Sekani not only fought, traded, and intermarried with them, but assimilated many of their customs and tried to adopt their divisions into exogamous matrilinear phratries. . . . The Sekani of McLeod lake . . . quickly abandoned the attempt. . . . The Finlay River Sekani, on the other hand, seem to have been intriguing with the phratric system for nearly a century. . . . They first attempted to establish phratries about 1850.[44]

In contrast to their southern neighbors, however, the adoption of phratries by the Sekani did not involve the adoption of class stratification. Any such concept remains quite foreign to them.

Very different notions of social status are found on the eastern border of the Plateau. From the Kutenai to the Nez Percé a man's war record fixes his social ranking. This record is based upon arbitrary acts, or coups, in typical Plains fashion. Each coup is objectively indicated by a notch on a stick, a mark on a man's white horse, or in some similar fashion. These are displayed as obviously as possible so that all may be made aware and kept aware of one's standing. Furthermore, formal recitation of coups is a common practice upon social occasions. The most significant aspect of this ranking is its relation to chieftain-

[43] Morice, *Canadian Dénés*, pp. 201 ff.; Irving Goldman, oral information.
[44] Jenness, *Sekani Indians*, pp. 46 f.